

Engaging Consumers in Reform Issues

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Health Reform Will Require Consumer Engagement to be Successful

- Making choices among health plan options
- Responding to “value based” purchasing and plans
- Understanding evidence-based findings and implications for changes in care

To participate actively in their health care and to make informed choices consumers must have

- easily available,
- accurate, and
- timely information, and
- they must use it.

Use Venues Appropriate to Audience

- Need to find out where people get information
- Adapt materials to the site and audience
- Be aware of cultural sensitivity; more than just language issues
- Multiple contacts important
- Most people rely on friends and family

Tips on Providing Information for Consumers

- Keep information simple and to the point
- Use common denominator and time frame
- Use whole numbers and natural frequencies rather than percentages
- Put information in a context that is meaningful to people
- When information lacks emotional meaning, it will not be weighted properly in decisionmaking

Survey Results: Coverage and cost

- 39% rated their understanding of how their health plan works as “fair” or “poor”
- 38.2% agreed or strongly agreed that medical treatments that work best cost more
- 85% believe patients should look for information on their own when a doctor recommends a particular treatment
- 90% disagree that patients don’t need to be concerned about the cost of health care if they have insurance

Patients Have Beliefs That Challenge Key Goals of Evidence-based Health Care

Patients believe:

- **More care is better**
- **Newer care is better**
- **More costly care is better**
- **Their physicians know best**
- **Treatment decisions and health care quality should not be discussed in terms of costs**

“I don’t see how extra care can be harmful to your health. Care would only benefit you.”

“Because if you’re going to have a doctor that’s better, he’ll charge more.”

Patients Are Unfamiliar With Key Tenets of Evidence-based Health Care

- Unfamiliar with the terms “medical evidence,” “quality guidelines,” and “quality standards”
- Only 49% said they had heard about medical research and only 34% had ever had a physician discuss the topic with them

“Of course my doctor uses evidence-based medicine. He makes decisions based on the available evidence—things like my test results and medical history.”